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Friday, 11 April 2003, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Derbez	(Mexico)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Schumacher
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United States of America	Mr. Williamson

Agenda

The Security Council and regional organizations: facing the new challenges to international peace and security.

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03-31970 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The Security Council and regional organizations: facing the new challenges to international peace and security

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and with the consent of the members of the Council, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation to the representative of Greece to participate in the meeting without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Magriotis (Greece) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Magriotis, Deputy Minister for Foreign Relations of Greece.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. César Gaviria, Secretary General of the Organization of American States.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to Mr. César Gaviria, Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and invite him to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Fholisani Sydney Mufamadi, representative of the presidency of the African Union and Minister for Provincial and Local Government of South Africa.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Fholisani Sydney Mufamadi, representative of the presidency of the African Union and Minister for Provincial and Local Government of South Africa, and invite him to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and invite him to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Ambassador Jan Kubis, Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Ambassador Jan Kubis, Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and invite him to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States, and invite him to

take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw to the attention of the representatives of regional organizations, Security Council members and other delegations attending this meeting that present in this Chamber are a group of Mexican parliamentarians who are members of the various political parties that constitute the Mexican legislative branch. They are representatives of the National Action Party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the Party of the Democratic Revolution, the Green Ecological Party of Mexico and the Labour Party. We have with us four members of the Senate of the Mexican Republic: Ms. Silvia Hernández, Mr. Jorge Zermeño, Mr. Jesús Ortega and Ms. Isabel Castellanos. We are also accompanied by seven members of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies: Ms. Elena Álvarez, Mr. Francisco Javier Sánchez Campuzano, Ms. María de los Ángeles Sánchez Lira, Ms. Érika Elizabeth Spezia, Mr. Félix Castellanos, Mr. Eddie Varón and Mr. Julio Castellanos.

I wish also to express my appreciation for the presence of ministers and other high officials attending this meeting on behalf of the Organization of American States, the League of Arab States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the African Union, the European Union and the Economic Community of West African States. Those organizations have distinguished themselves by virtue of a high level of cooperation with the United Nations in the field of international peace and security. Together with the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Caribbean Community, the Southern African Development Community, the Council of Europe, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Commonwealth Secretariat, they are working actively with the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to develop a framework of greater cooperation in those areas. We are confident that, with their contributions today, we shall take a new and important step on behalf of international peace and security, perhaps marking the beginning of a new stage in international relations.

The challenges that we currently face and the firm resolve to act within the framework of international law and within the multilateral system that we have built with such effort oblige us to identify courses of action that will strengthen the notion of collective security as well as ways to achieve the peaceful settlement of conflicts. That is a historic and unavoidable responsibility for all of us who aspire to build a secure, prosperous and democratic international environment that is governed by the rule of law and that promotes the common interest.

For that reason, I invite those participating in this public meeting to consider, within an interactive format and with our eyes focused on the future, the most pressing issues, with a view to determining together how the United Nations and the organizations represented here can trace out a course of action capable of meeting the demands of the circumstances.

In order to facilitate an interactive dialogue, the Secretary-General and representatives of regional organizations are invited to make brief statements of seven to 10 minutes each. Three to five minutes will be provided for them to respond to questions or comments from members of the Security Council. Two members of the Council will take the floor for three to five minutes each to make comments or ask questions after each statement made by representatives of regional organizations.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: It is wonderful to see you here, Mr. Minister, presiding over the Council at this meeting.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your timely initiative in arranging this important meeting. We are clearly at a crucial juncture in the development of international relations, and I am pleased to see representatives of so many regional organizations here. This demonstrates our joint interest in forging common strategies to address the challenges we all face.

The feeling of global insecurity has seldom, if ever, been greater than it is today. Equally, there has never been a more keenly felt desire among peoples and nations for a peace and security framework based firmly on the international rule of law. That framework must be capable of responding swiftly and effectively to the challenges of our rapidly changing world.

We live in a world where unprecedented wealth coexists with terrible deprivation. Globalization brings opportunities for some, but excludes far too many. Interdependence and open borders knit us closer together, while intolerance drives us apart. Science offers unprecedented promise, yet AIDS kills one child every minute. Technological progress enables us to communicate in a split second across thousands of miles, but has given international terrorists tools that can help them in their plans to obliterate thousands of people in the same split second.

I could go on with this catalogue, but I do not intend to. It must be clear to all of us that in the twenty-first century many of the challenges we face are global. From the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to trafficking in small arms, from climate change to the emergence of new, deadly viruses — all have the potential to threaten not only our stability, but our survival.

These issues are not new to the United Nations agenda. But for many, they were brought into more acute and painful focus after the events of 11 September 2001 — and now even more so by the war in Iraq, which people across the globe have been following in real time on their television screens.

Yet despite the sense of vulnerability and uncertainty that pervades the global consciousness, people and nations retain the hope of strengthening the foundations of stability and uniting around our common humanity. People look for institutions and systems to uphold shared principles and ensure multilateral solutions. They look to the United Nations. They look for ways to translate into reality the ideals expressed in the United Nations Charter, which established the fundamental principles of international law. Those principles are the outcome of the long and often tragic history of humankind.

Our Organization — for all its imperfections, real and perceived — has built up unique experience in dealing with a range of crises, by bringing humanitarian relief to millions in need, helping people rebuild their countries from the ruins of armed conflict, promoting human rights and the rule of law, and engaging in many other activities that have come to be seen as essential parts of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building.

In all these endeavours, the United Nations has relied, to a greater or lesser extent, on regional partners in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Together, through all the turbulent years of the past few decades, we have learnt a great deal about the need to transform a sense of collective insecurity into a system of collective security. That is precisely the purpose of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, which guides and inspires the Council's meeting today.

Now we need to redouble our efforts to find common ground and purpose again. We need to move towards creating a network of effective and mutually reinforcing mechanisms — regional and global — that are flexible and responsive to the reality we live in today.

The United Nations stands ready to work together with you, the regional organizations, in that cardinal mission. This meeting today promises to inject new momentum into our partnership. For the sake of the world's people, we must make that partnership succeed.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Schumacher (Germany): We very much welcome the initiative of the Mexican presidency to discuss questions related to Chapter VIII of the Charter. I would like to remind colleagues that this is in the tradition of the founding Conference of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945, where Mexico and the other Latin American States played a vital role in drafting that particular Chapter of the Charter, based on the Act of Chapultepec which, only a month before — March 1945 — had been adopted in Mexico City. So you, Sir, are acting in a very good tradition.

It goes without saying that I fully associate myself with, and argue along the lines of, the statement of the European Union, which will be made later. This is clearly not only an automatic place holder. It is in particular the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe which have significantly developed their capabilities in the past in the areas of conflict-prevention and cooperation with the United Nations.

The remarkably promising development of relationships between the United Nations and regional organizations can be followed in the annual reports of the Secretary-General since 1997-98, and I believe that we owe it in particular to the initiatives of the

incumbent Secretary-General that the potential of Chapter VIII now seems to be unfolding in a very positive manner.

I will try to limit myself to a few points in an attempt to contribute positively to this ongoing debate, which is part of an overall process of reform of the United Nations — a process which has developed in particular since the Millennium Assembly and which has underlined how relevant this Organization remains today as the vital cornerstone of multilateral cooperation.

My first point is that, while the United Nations has been extending and strengthening continuously its instruments for conflict management over the past decade — from early warning to prevention, and from peacekeeping to, in particular, post-conflict peace-building — expectations directed towards the Organization have risen dramatically.

The Secretary-General has just mentioned the fact that many of the challenges we are facing are global, with the potential to threaten not only our stability but our very survival. The United Nations is simply not capable of coping alone with challenges of this dimension — either logistically or financially. A supportive and increasingly complementary interchange between the United Nations and regional organizations becomes ever more important.

The second point is that, however, the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the United Nations. The Security Council is the central forum for international conflict management. If the primacy of the Council with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security is rejected, the very foundations of international law, as represented by the Charter, will be brought into question. No other universally accepted legal basis for constraining wanton acts of violence exists.

It is imperative that regional security operations remain mandated by the Council if the legal basis of the international security system is to be maintained.

Thirdly, to bring this primacy of the United Nations and the Security Council and the complementarity of regional organizations into synch with one another, we strongly suggest that the dialogue between the Council and the regional organizations be put on a regular and substantive basis. We might be able to do it already, within the framework of the Arria formula.

We might even use this important issue as a starting point to do away with antiquated practices and customs of the Council, such as the Arria and other formulas, that do not help to increase the transparency and efficiency of the Council's work.

Having heard nine years of debate in the General Assembly in the Open-ended Working Group on Council reform, I think that today we need to bring some fresh air into the work of this body.

Fourthly, for many, many reasons, the Security Council needs to improve and strengthen its channel of dialogue with the General Assembly. As far as this is concerned, we are already on a good track. As far as regional organizations are concerned, the Charter itself reflects a link between Article 52 — the main Article of Chapter VIII — and the responsibilities of the General Assembly, through the reference to Article 35 in paragraph 4 of Article 52.

The General Assembly is currently involved in an important process aimed at discussing and further developing a draft resolution on conflict prevention. A dialogue between the Council and the General Assembly could be of help to both bodies and might serve as an early-warning mechanism for regional powers, and vice-versa for the Security Council, as a source of information for openings and limits regions might have in influencing and mastering emerging crises.

As a last point, let me say something about Africa. We will have important speakers from Africa later, in particular from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which is already playing such an important role in the conflict-prevention and peacekeeping operations and activities of the Security Council.

I should like to welcome once again the efforts that have been made to establish and strengthen the African security architecture through the pan-African Peace and Security Council. We are aware of our commitment emanating from the Millennium Declaration and remain committed to strengthening African capabilities in the field of conflict prevention and to enhancing technical and financial assistance, so that by 2010 African countries and regional and subregional organizations will be able to engage more

efficiently to prevent and resolve violent conflicts on the continent, as laid down in the African Action Plan by the G-8 leaders at Kananaskis.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Germany for his kind words about the role of my country.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I am very honoured and pleased, Mr. President, to see you back here with us. I think that we should keep you here longer, if Mexico allows, because your presidency is such a welcome one.

I should like to express my great appreciation for the initiative of the Mexican presidency in scheduling this important debate. I should like also to say that the keynote address just made by the Secretary-General contains points which we must reflect on and that are of importance to our meeting today and for us in the Council in future.

Moments of crisis are particularly well suited to reflection, and today's exercise, proposed your presidency, Sir, comes at a most appropriate moment. The world is facing a crisis of great proportions whose consequences might be very far-reaching and could extend well beyond our lifetimes.

Regional organizations have a key role to play, and there is sufficient provision for it in the Charter of our Organization — in Chapter VIII. However, regional organizations cannot substitute for the role and character of the United Nations as a universal Organization. Instead, regional organizations are intermediate structures that enable cooperation and coordination at the regional level in a heterogeneous world. The manner in which those organizations interact with the universal Organization that is the United Nations has been a matter of debate in the past and will continue to be in future.

In actuality, their role is dependent on their cohesion and on a sound regional consensus. This is particularly the case in matters of international peace and security, inasmuch as a regional consensus assists the Security Council by guiding its deliberations. When regional consensuses are taken into account, they ultimately improve compliance with, and the sustainability of, decisions that seek to prevent and resolve conflicts.

In southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has played such a key role. Its origins are deeply rooted in the convictions of the then-frontline States, whose national policies sought to further the cause of self-determination in Africa. Their participation in bringing about the end of colonialism and apartheid in Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa is well documented in the Security Council and is recognized and reflected in landmark Council resolutions, processes and missions.

Today, SADC continues to play a pivotal role in conflict prevention and resolution in the region as well as in promoting economic integration among member States. SADC members played a pivotal role in the resolution of the conflict in Angola by energetically adopting policies and measures to curb the ability of an insurgency to wage war on the people of Angola. Furthermore, their policies insured compliance with Security Council resolutions. That is our main task: compliance with Security Council resolutions. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Organization is actively engaged and has played a pivotal role in providing for the dialogue that led to the recent appointment of a Government of national reconciliation, while upholding the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity that unite the region.

Present events might preclude fundamental changes in the pattern of international relations. In our view, States should take a number of decisive political decisions, one of the most important issues being the subject of our meeting, addressed by the Secretary-General and other speakers. Moreover, the drafters of the United Nations Charter, in their wisdom, also established a set of provisions dealing with this subject.

We believe that regional arrangements based on the political will and commitment of States have enormous potential and that in the future regional organizations can play a fundamental and ever increasing role in guaranteeing the peaceful settlement of local disputes and, over all, a more secure and equitable world. By reinforcing political and economical cooperation in the framework of regional and subregional organizations, States will be better prepared to defend their interests, their sovereignty and their individual and collective security.

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter contains provisions concerning regional arrangements, their role in the maintenance of peace and their relations with the Security Council. More than ever, the United Nations is called on to play a key role by encouraging and promoting dialogue among its Members with a view to achieving the goal of strengthening regional organizations and enabling them to play an increasing role in the maintenance of international peace and security. I sincerely hope that our meeting this morning will make a significant contribution to restating and clarifying such a role, particularly by defining ways for the years ahead.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Angola for his kind words addressed to me. The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. César Gaviria, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gaviria (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to express my thanks to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, President of the Security Council, for the invitation extended to the Organization of American States. Without doubt, this meeting is timely because we have recently seen that peace and security cannot be achieved in isolation but require decisions, sustained political will, resources and sacrifice. We in the Organization of American States have assumed the responsibilities set out in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, which grants regional organizations responsibility for the maintenance of peace. For us, that includes the task of preventing local disputes from becoming international crises.

In the Americas, in just over a century, since 1890, we have succeeded in creating a number of political institutions and instruments that have enabled us, in general, to preserve peace and security, although we had some problems during the cold war. We achieved that by constructing instruments that have helped us fundamentally in achieving the peaceful settlement of disputes. Especially over the last decade, we have achieved a good amount of reconciliation on how to make the defence of democracy the pillar of peace and security in our hemisphere. We have ensured that the defence of democracy and the protection of human rights are compatible with the principles enshrined in the Charter: non-intervention, self-determination, the legal equality of States, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and, above all, the peaceful settlement of disputes.

As well, simultaneously, in particular in the 1990s, we worked on a series of conferences on confidence- and security-building measures that have greatly assisted us in eradicating many regional disputes. That has also enabled a process of integration based on regional instruments and on a process of integration at the hemispheric level, which we are seeking through trade. We are resolving many of the regional differences and disputes.

Today we can say that the principal challenges to security in the Americas lie in non-military threats. In the Americas of today, our principal problems are terrorism, drug trafficking and the illicit trade in arms. Further, in the Caribbean States, natural disasters constitute the greatest challenge to regional security. Faced with such non-military challenges, we have created a series of regional instruments.

A few months ago, we had the opportunity to come before the Security Council to describe how we are dealing with the problem of terrorism in the Americas and how the events of 11 September 2001 have led us to be relatively well-prepared. Over the last decade, we held two conferences to combat terrorism. We created plans of action We established a committee against terrorism in the Americas. When those incidents occurred, we were able to rapidly create a secretariat and actively work on a series of issues, which we had the opportunity to explain here. We put particular emphasis on cooperation to deal with problems of a financial nature. In doing that, we were able to take advantage of an institution within our organization: the Inter-American Drug Control Commission. It gave us the ability to work especially on issues such as money laundering. In that case, it was possible to use those structures and mechanisms to tackle the problems of terrorism.

As I said, we tackled the problem of drug trafficking within the framework of the Commission I mentioned. First, we formulated a strategy among all countries of the Americas. Then we created a multilateral evaluation mechanism. Today, there exists more trust, a common language and a series of strategies that take into account all aspects of drug use and production. I believe that we have eliminated much of the confrontational language that prevailed in our

hemisphere and have replaced it with a language of cooperation.

In connection with money laundering, we have broad regional experience in addressing its connections to terrorism, as well as links with other organizations, such as the Inter-American Bank, that have cooperated closely with us. We have been able to develop training for financial intelligence units. In particular, we have received assistance from the European Union and such countries as Spain, France, Canada and the United States. That has been quite useful in enabling us to tackle this kind of non-military challenge.

I also wish to note that, in the inter-American system, we have autonomous human rights institutions, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These have made a significant contribution in addressing human rights problems, especially under military dictatorships. In more recent times, they have assisted in protecting a new generation of rights. With respect to the problems of illicit arms trafficking and manufacturing, with Mexico's assistance we now have the first regional convention on illicit arms trafficking, which is fully in force.

In the Americas, we have also developed an instrument that we regard as particularly important: the Meetings of Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General of the Americas. The purpose of these Meetings is to address threats of a non-military nature and crimes committed by transnational organizations. This has all been developed on the basis of legal and judicial cooperation among the countries of the Americas, which is allowing us to tackle a number of different problems, including corruption.

Over the past 15 years, moreover, we in the inter-American system have learned to cope with the problem of anti-personnel landmines before it became of worldwide concern. We have been working on this issue since 1991 and have largely succeeded in our demining tasks in the Central American republics following the lengthy conflicts of the 1980s. Peace now prevails there and we have managed to demine most of those countries, although some, such as Nicaragua, have a little way to go. We have worked intensively in recent months on the destruction of mines held by armed forces. About 500,000 of these have been destroyed this year in Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru. In Peru and Ecuador, we are also working on associated problems.

Since 1994, we have been convening Meetings of Defense Ministers of the Americas. This is a standing instrument designed to address the question of confidence-building measures, white papers on defence and compliance with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and our own registers. We have a convention on transparency in strategic arms. We have managed to create a climate of trust, transparency and predictability. In the past few years, we have also considered the issue of conflict prevention.

We have worked on a variety of problems, in some cases to ensure that confidence-building measures are respected when cases are referred to the International Court of Justice or arbitration machinery, as in the case of Honduras and Nicaragua. We have also acted as facilitator in negotiations between countries, such as those recently held between Belize and Guatemala.

I wish to note that we are working primarily through peaceful means to prevent conflicts. We have made progress with our traditional instrument, the Inter-American Treaty on Reciprocal Assistance, which was invoked in the case of the attack against the United States. A series of instruments constitutes our framework for dealing with the new generation of security threats that has arisen since the end of the cold war. To that end, in order to give effect to such instruments, we have scheduled a security conference to take place in Mexico in May.

I conclude by once again extending our thanks to the Foreign Minister of Mexico for having organized and convened this meeting. I also thank the Secretary-General, for whom we in the Organization of American States have the greatest respect.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Sir, and the delegation of Mexico for convening this very important meeting. As has already been said, it falls within the best traditions of regional approaches and visions in Latin America since the foundation of the United Nations. This meeting is taking place at a time of particular significance for the United Nations and the international system. It is clear that we need to reflect, in great depth and with great care, on the features that we wish the international system to assume in coming decades.

I also thank my friend the Seçretary-General and former President Gaviria for his briefing to us, which comprehensively addressed the inter-American security agenda. He lucidly covered the current threats to our security, which have been intensified by globalization. Local issues have become globalized and now involve international networks of individuals and groups that are beyond the control of local authorities. The principal wars we are now fighting include the struggles against terrorism, which is brutally promoted by networks that are rapidly becoming international, and against illegal drug trafficking and consumption, which destroy both the producer and the consuming societies. Arms trafficking fuels all these activities. There are many links between these phenomena, which feed off one another. Our struggle against them will be extremely complex.

The role of regional organizations and their work, in cooperation with the United Nations, are crucial. Regional and subregional intergovernmental security mechanisms are extremely important and relevant in this context. The fruitful work of regional organizations, such as those represented here, should be promoted through a dynamic and energetic relationship with the Security Council in the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter. Obviously, there are clear benefits to close synergy between these organizations and this Council. The United Nations is a place where we enjoy legitimacy and can overcome our fears and apprehensions and undermine the alliances that militate against cooperation, thus contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security.

In our region, as Mr. Gaviria has noted, there is a growing awareness that the fight against these scourges cannot be separated from the struggle for development. For example, moral condemnation of terrorism should not make us forget the basic issue of the roots of that phenomenon, which are not necessarily the same in all regions. The foundations of poverty, marginalization, growing destitution, corruption among political classes and the loss of value of institutions are all factors that decisively contribute on our continent to the development of the plagues of terrorism and drug trafficking.

As the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) has said, the threat in our region is not a military one. Clearly, then, the solutions are also not military. It is therefore an important development that the Organization of American States has developed democratic covenants and made intensive efforts to defend democracy and strengthen institutions in order to protect human rights and foster legal cooperation in the Americas so that we will be able to address issues pertaining to good governance and the fight against corruption. However, I would once again like to say that it is in the areas of addressing inequality and providing education, health care and human dignity that we are still lacking. Sooner or later, that shortcoming will have a very decisive effect upon all the issues pertaining to peace and security in our continent.

I believe that the OAS has recently carried out a tremendous amount of work in the area of conflict prevention. We very much look forward to the upcoming conference to be held in Mexico at which we will have an opportunity to review the continent-wide security mechanisms that have served us thus far in order to make the reforms necessary to be able to tackle the new challenges confronting our region and the world. Latin America, the OAS and the inter-American system are fully aware of their global responsibilities. We must meet those responsibilities in our region and in our part of the world by addressing matters of a global nature. However, we must do so in the context of our particular characteristics.

Before I conclude, I would like to ask the Secretary General of the OAU whether he could at some point tell us about how he views the need to enhance the synergy between the Security Council and the OAS. I would also like to ask him to go into further detail with regard to the basic goals and principles he expects will be addressed at the special hemispheric security conference scheduled to take place in Mexico in May.

Mr. Williamson (United States of America): I thank the Secretary-General for his remarks. I would also like to thank Mr. Gaviria for his thoughtful presentation.

The United States is committed to its membership in the Organization of American States (OAS), and believes that there is a vital role for regional and subregional organizations to play in the furtherance of peace and security. One thing that can be a limitation on the United Nations is that it can be too distant and too bureaucratic — a victim of its own success, with many more Members than its founders could have imagined. The United Nations is often stretched thin in

efforts to respond to problems in all corners of the globe. Regional organizations — as opposed to those of us here in New York — have a far greater vested interest in, and sensitivity to, regional situations, not least because they recognize that a crisis in a neighbouring State can soon become their own crisis.

Regional organizations help to impose responsibility upon their member States, strengthening the will of States to deal with regional problems. Regional organizations have a great deal to teach, and learn, from each other. From supervising elections to training police, from economic development to regional law enforcement and from border control to the establishment of the rule of law, expertise transcends national and regional boundaries. A worthy outcome of this meeting would be the development of a systematic way to share that expertise.

I would like to ask Mr. Gaviria whether, as he considers the problems and challenges facing regions other than our own, he thinks that there are areas in which the Organization of American States has developed expertise that can be shared with other regional organizations and whether there are models of cooperation with the United Nations that can be adapted usefully by others.

Additionally, I would like to touch briefly on just two areas in which regional organizations can work in conjunction with the United Nations.

First, the United Nations should rely increasingly on regional organizations to assume responsibility for peacekeeping efforts. In that regard, I praise the decision of the African Union to establish a Peace and Security Council to resolve and manage conflicts on the African continent. In that regard, I have a question for the representative of the African Union. Several African States face internal instability and conflicts that, while not immediate threats to peace and security, nonetheless require the attention and assistance of the international community. The Security Council takes up those issues, but often a coordinated economic and political approach is needed. Guinea-Bissau is one example; another is the Central African Republic. What role could the African Union's new Peace and Security Council play in addressing those problems?

The United States will continue to support the development of the sustained capacity of subregional organizations and African militaries to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts and crises. Consistent with the Group of Eight Action Plan to enhance African peacekeeping capacity, where regional and subregional organizations show promise and member commitment, the United States provides assistance to enhance both ongoing peace-support activities as well as long-term training and infrastructure requirements. For example, the United States has been pleased to provide over $10 million to assist with South Africa's efforts in Burundi, where South African peacekeepers have helped to keep an unsteady peace process on track for over a year.

Also with regard to the African Union, the issue of human rights atrocities and the need to end the culture of impunity in African States such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi is before the Security Council and the United Nations. A lasting resolution to those conflicts requires that accountability and justice be carried out by the people and transitional Governments in those States. To do so they will need assistance to develop their investigative and judicial capabilities, as well as the ability to establish fact-finding commissions. The African Union has established a bureau to address human rights issues. What role can the African Union play in assisting with those transitional justice issues in places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi? Would the perception of justice be better served if a regional organization like the African Union assisted with fact-finding tribunals rather than having them run entirely by the United Nations or other international organizations?

During the recent crisis in Côte d'Ivoire the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its member States developed capable military leadership and competent units. In response, the United States has worked with France, the United Kingdom and others to provide significant assistance to the ECOWAS deployment. That support, valued at over $4.5 million, includes troop and equipment transportation, as well as maintenance of United-States-supplied equipment such as vehicles, generators and radios.

Donor support from maturing regional organizations must be multifaceted and contingent upon the good-faith efforts of the member States. Significantly, the United Nations has formalized the importance of working with regional groups. The Security Council has just passed resolution 1474 (2003), calling on regional organizations —

particularly the African Union — to assist Somali parties and States in the region in their efforts to fully implement the arms embargo, which is an essential part of the Somali national reconciliation process.

Because the traffic in arms, drugs and diamonds destabilizes Governments and undermines peace and security in Africa, regional efforts can be increasingly important. In that vein, I have a question for the representative of ECOWAS. The Security Council has spent a great deal of time addressing the issue of small arms in West Africa. The ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa is consistently identified in our discussions as having the most useful potential for stopping the flood of weapons, and the Security Council has endorsed the Moratorium in several of its resolutions. But the Moratorium and its enforcement provisions are not working as effectively as they should. Why is that? A key problem appears to be the failure of ECOWAS States to establish the monitoring and enforcement agencies they pledged to establish. What can the United Nations Secretariat do to spur that?

The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations is working closely with regional and subregional actors elsewhere in Africa, particularly for the enhancement of the capabilities of African troop contributors. Those efforts are not intended to replace the engagement of non-African countries in peacekeeping operations on the continent, but they recognize an increasing commitment and responsibility on the part of African countries. The recent meeting between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and African Chiefs of Defence Staff was an important step in developing a framework for enhancing African peacekeeping capabilities on a multilateral basis.

A second area in which regional organizations can work in conjunction with the United Nations is counter-terrorism, a problem not limited to just a handful of countries. Since 11 September 2001, we have seen the United Nations galvanized to fight the threat of terrorism. But to be effective, the United Nations must combat terrorism on a regional basis as well. No State can control its own borders alone; it must have the active cooperation of its neighbours. The vocal reaction of the African Union to the terrorist attack in Kenya and that of the Association of South-East Asian Nations to the bombing in Indonesia signal recognition, on a regional basis, of the human and economic toll of terrorism.

The 6 March special meeting of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee showed that international organizations — including global, regional and subregional organizations — have major roles to play in the full worldwide implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). That meeting brought more than 65 such organizations together and will help solidify regional relationships and raise the counter-terrorism profile of those organizations.

The United States is pleased that the Organization of American States (OAS) has agreed to hold a follow-up conference in Washington for regional and subregional organizations, and we look forward to providing support to the OAS on that initiative.

Regional organizations — including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of American States — have endorsed resolution 1373 (2001), have drafted counter-terrorism action plans and have created special counter-terrorism bodies to help their member States implement the resolution. I would be interested to hear how they plan to live up to resolution 1373 (2001).

Regional and subregional organizations in Africa — including the African Union, ECOWAS and the Southern African Development Community — must assist their member States by encouraging them to give top priority to working with the Counter-Terrorism Committee and with global/functional organizations to improve African States' counter-terrorism capabilities and to become parties to all 12 international Conventions relating to terrorism.

Organizations such as the Group of Eight, the Financial Action Task Force and the international financial institutions have developed expertise, standards and practices that are invaluable to United Nations Member States, to regional organizations and to the Counter-Terrorism Committee as they all work separately and together to implement resolution 1373 (2001). The challenge will be to define the venue: to develop, through experience, the most efficient ways of working together.

Ultimately, States must take responsibility for conflict that plagues their regions. Through dealing with issues on a regional level, States may take pride in living up to their responsibilities to their neighbours

and to their own people. Regional organizations will be most successful if their member States are truly representative of their people.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. César Gaviria, Secretary General of the Organization of American States, for three minutes so that he may respond to the comments and questions raised by the representatives of Chile and of the United States.

Mr. Gaviria (*spoke in Spanish*): I believe that we in the Organization of American States (OAS) have had some experiences that can be of use to other regional organizations. Specifically, for example, in the area of terrorism, we have made significant progress since 11 September 2001 and have created a general environment of cooperation. We have agreed on a convention, already ratified by a large number of States, whose fundamental focus has been on cooperation and on accepting the definitions arising from United Nations conventions. We have spent our energy on trying to define, not terrorism, but rather the fundamental and critical aspects of cooperation.

When norms take the form of treaties, political legitimacy is greatly enhanced in States. In the Americas, when we deal with offenses of organized crime, there is also a series of aspects that are involved in such cooperation. For example, we have problems related to banking secrecy and to the right of asylum. There are a great number of aspects that can maintain legitimacy — a prerequisite for their effectiveness — only if they are regulated by a convention or by a treaty.

Naturally, all the countries of the OAS respect and are committed to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). That is the principle on which we are working: full acceptance of that resolution. I also believe that, in the inter-American system, we have mechanisms for the settlement of disputes — already used for many decades — that could be useful for other regions, especially since we in the inter-American system do not call for the use of force; we are totally committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes. That is our fundamental focus, and I believe that we have achieved some important results.

We also have had some post-conflict experiences, and I should like to mention one that other regional organizations could explore at some point: using only civilian personnel to deal with post-conflict solutions. After the confrontations and the domestic conflict that took place in Nicaragua, an OAS mission was able to demobilize 22,000 armed personnel using only civilian staff. I know that that cannot be done in every case, but in the Americas it has been possible to take that approach. I also believe that it could be an important experience for other organizations.

On the subject of terrorism, at the meeting held here in the Security Council we committed ourselves to cooperating with other regional organizations and with the United Nations to follow up on what was said here and on our discussion on the experiences of various organizations. We are fully prepared to have such a follow-up meeting within the inter-American system.

Moreover, and in conclusion, I understand that the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials is something on which Mexico has already taken the initiative by sharing its experiences with other countries. But our organization is also doing something very interesting: we are harmonizing instruments related to fighting drug trafficking, to border control, to money laundering and to financial structures and are creating databases that can serve all countries and can be accessed by them — there, we have had some pilot experiences. But we are harmonizing legal and judicial cooperation being worked out through annual meetings of Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General so as to tackle the various types of crime that are now so widespread. As the representative of Chile said, globalization has empowered them. But by using these same instruments to deal with all of those crimes, using the network that was created in the Convention to fight corruption, and using them against drug trafficking and terrorism, I believe that we are developing an approach that might be interesting.

We are also very much bearing in mind the regional organizations within the OAS area. The Caribbean has its own organization, and we are working on financial aspects in the Caribbean. We have also worked in Central America, which has a treaty on security and democracy. In MERCOSUR, the Andean area, they have their own concerns. I believe there is a

set of elements there that might be of interest to other regional organizations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary General of the Organization of American States for his clarifications.

The next speaker on my list is His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Moussa (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to express my pleasure that my participation in a Council meeting for the first time since I was chosen Secretary-General of the League of Arab States comes as a response to an invitation by the Mexican presidency. It was based on an initiative that embodies your thinking, Mr. President, as Foreign Minister of Mexico. I therefore wish to congratulate you for presiding over the Council in the month of April and for the distinguished role you have played. I wish you success in your endeavours. It gives me pleasure to congratulate as well your predecessors, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Representative of Guinea, for their efforts in the midst of extremely difficult and complicated circumstances.

When I received the invitation in mid-March to participate in this important meeting, the Iraqi crisis was at an extremely critical stage. Every effort was made to avoid war, to stress the authority of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security and to prevent the Council's failure and paralysis. It should be recalled that the Council's mechanisms, particularly the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), proved that it was possible to successfully monitor weapons of mass destruction suspected to be in Iraq. We hoped that our meeting would take place, in April, while the Council was discharging its primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, and while it was acting on behalf of the international community in carrying out its duties under this responsibility.

In fact, the Council was right when it refused to give a license or authorization to a single State to declare war on Iraq. The Council was also right when it refused to qualify the war on Iraq as legitimate. Once the war started, the Council's role was discarded completely. Fighting raged for more than three weeks, yet the Council remained silent, and this silence has seriously affected its credibility and role. More, it has affected the credibility of the collective security system with which the United Nations is entrusted under the Charter and the Security Council resolutions relevant to international peace and security.

It was only normal that the situation sparked an ignoble debate on the role of the Security Council. Some do not see a role for the Council in the preservation of peace in light of the new developments and are trying to marginalize it, while others believe that the Council's role has in fact already been marginalized. Some want the Council to resume the role assigned to it and want it reaffirmed. Others see that the role of the United Nations as a whole is diminishing. Is this not to be expected, given the international situation and the attempts to call the shots of war and peace worldwide and to steer the situation away from the existing standards of international legitimacy? This can happen only at the expense of the United Nations, both the organization itself and the system as a whole.

We would have wished to meet today with the Council at the helm, addressing the issues and asserting that security and peace, when threatened, should be taken care of. This makes us wonder about the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Have they not been violated and threatened? What is the position of the Council? Where is its role? Judging by the way things are, can we think that the Security Council can remain faithfully entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter? Can the Council concede — or has it perhaps already conceded — that force is a source of legitimacy, or a substitute for it? This soul-searching is valid, particularly among third world countries that no longer feel that the Security Council is the safe haven they can resort to when danger is impending and when stability, peace and security are threatened in their territories or in the territories of their neighbours.

Despite our reservations, and those of others referred to above, concerning the role of the Security Council, we cannot accept that the Council should be held in contempt. We cannot accept that its role should be confined to repairing the damage of war, thus reducing it to an executing arm for policies it did not design. We cannot accept that the Council should be forced to face the consequences without having first

addressed the causes. This is in many ways a dangerous course, not in the least because it usurps the Council's role in preventive diplomacy and in fulfilling its mandate under the Charter — the maintenance of international peace and security — but because it thus gives legitimacy to the consequences of war once it is over. I cannot imagine that any on the Council would accept that. The permanent members are not authorized to do that, and the non-permanent members were not elected to bear witness to the diminished value of the Council and its compromised role.

I came to this meeting in my capacity as the representative of the League of Arab States. Like other elements of the international system, the League is currently under a severe attack, given the distressing circumstances in the Middle East as accentuated by the invasion of Iraq, as well as by the deliberate failure to arrive at a just, balanced and peaceful settlement to the Palestinian question and a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The League did, however, play the role expected of it by responding to the deteriorating political and security situation in the region with regard to Palestine, Iraq and regional security. All of these tasks were an expression of our upholding and furthering the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the Articles relevant to the role of the Security Council and of regional organizations in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

With regard to the question of Palestine, as the Council may well be aware, the League of Arab States decided at the highest level — the Council of Kings and Heads of Arab State — to launch a straightforward peace initiative calling for an end to the Arab-Israeli dispute and for the conclusion of a peace agreement with Israel that guarantees security to all the Arab States of the region — if Israel will commit to a complete withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, to a just solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees, and to accepting the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on the Palestinian territories occupied since 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. This was the decision of the regional organization in the Middle East, that is, the League of Arab States, on an issue related to peace and security in and around the region and in the world.

What was the Security Council's position on that important initiative, which was officially brought to its attention? The Council did nothing. The initiative earned no more than a cursory mention in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002). Furthermore, also in the context of the Arab-Israeli dispute and in addition to that initiative, the States members of the League of Arab States unanimously recognized that a just and comprehensive peace, pursued in the context of international legitimacy, is the strategic choice of the Arab States. This calls for a concomitant commitment by Israel.

Did the Council capitalize on the offer? Did it try to build upon it, thereby sparing the peace process the dangers inherent in the apparent partisan support for one of the parties to the conflict on the part of some of the brokers, which pursue a policy of double standards? What did the Council do to end the complete disregard and defiance by Israel of those resolutions? Again, the Council did nothing. That was yet another failure by the Council.

As for Iraq, the League of Arab States pursued its role with clarity and determination from the very first days of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. In August 1990, the Council of the League of Arab States adopted, at its Cairo Summit, a crucial resolution reaffirming the League's commitment to the relevant Security Council resolutions adopted earlier that month. The League condemned the aggression; stressed that it would not recognize the outcome; called for the withdrawal of the invading forces to the positions they occupied prior to 1 August 1990; reconfirmed its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait; and supported the measures taken by Kuwait to liberate its territory. That resolution, adopted by the League of Arab States, played a primary role in legitimizing an Arab and international coalition to liberate Kuwait in 1991.

Working collectively with Arab diplomacy, the League of Arab States made a tremendous effort in support of the Security Council's mission to inspect for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. It made a further effort to ensure that when the inspectors returned to Iraq they would be guaranteed freedom of work and movement — an effort that was recognized in Security Council resolution 1441 (2002). That was indeed an important step, which gave the Council time and justification to oppose the military option, which was vehemently pursued last year, until, on 20 March this year, it materialized, without authorization by the United Nations.

On another level, the Arab States rallied round an international effort aimed at implementing Council resolutions on weapons of mass destruction, as shown by the vote cast by Syria, the Arab member of the Council, in favour of resolution 1441 (2002). That resolution was supported by the League of Arab States because it called for the enforcement of resolutions of international legitimacy, while not triggering war, either implicitly or explicitly.

When hopes for achieving a peaceful resolution of the crisis became dimmer and the drums of war began to beat louder, the Council of the League of Arab States stood firm, clearly expressing its opposition to attacking Iraq or threatening the safety and security of any Arab State. It called for a peaceful resolution of the Iraqi crisis in the conflict of international legitimacy. That was an outcome of the Arab League Summit held in Sharm el-Sheikh in March 2003, just as it had been in Beirut in March 2002.

In other words, the official position of the League of Arab States with regard to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict — a conflict that is still raging and that can be ended only through a just and balanced peace — as well as to the situation of Iraq, which will trigger grave developments inside that country and at the regional level, is supportive of international legitimacy, which is the only path to justice and security and, therefore, stability and peace in the entire Middle East region.

In addition to dealing with those two major issues, the League of Arab States has defined a framework vision for regional security in the Middle East. That vision can be realized only through the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction from the region, without exception. Disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction is just one step on the road towards making the Middle East region a nuclear-weapon-free zone, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, which makes compliance mandatory.

I would like to speak frankly about Israel's possession of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and about the need to address the threat that they pose and to subject them to inspections as the preliminary steps ultimately leading to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, thus preventing an arms race there.

The League of Arab States is thus seeking to invigorate its regional role in the prevention, management and settlement of disputes by peaceful means. The Ministerial Council of the League recently recommended the establishment of an Arab mechanism for that purpose, which we are planning to activate as soon as possible. Furthermore, given the importance attached by its member States to fighting terrorism, the League of Arab States has appointed a focal point entrusted with coordinating our efforts with those of the Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee. Work is currently under way to enhance our human resource capabilities in various fields, including those of disarmament and civil society.

Moreover, the League of Arab States, working in cooperation with the United Nations, has played a vital role in launching the first-ever Arab effort to evaluate human development in its member States. The objective is to set out a comprehensive vision that will assist our member States, individually and collectively, in addressing their vulnerabilities and addressing them in accordance with regional and international prerogatives. In seeking to reactivate and renew its role, the League of Arab States is trying to rise to the challenge and respond to the demands of our times. However, that effort must be consistent with the purposes of the United Nations and must be carried out in cooperation with its agencies.

The collective security system provided for in the Charter of the United Nations was based on solid principles, foremost among them respect by all for international law; the commitment of the Council to its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security; and cooperation in pursuit of thess objectives with regional arrangements as defined in Article 52 of the Charter.

While seeking to address the challenges that the system faces, we should note that that system — which has thus far stood the test of time — is currently facing one of the most serious challenges to its authority. Bypassing the law and the Charter and giving precedence to the use of military force outside the context of international legitimacy has almost become commonplace. Some are even deliberating on how to codify occupation and on ways in which foreign forces might administer an independent State. The Council is

being called upon to jump on the bandwagon and legitimize these cases, which were generally considered a thing of the past. This is an extremely bad omen for the future of international relations. Should such a scenario come to pass, the system enshrined in the Charter will be threatened with collapse. The United Nations cannot legitimize or legalize a government installed as a result of military invasion, contrary to the will of the people concerned. Legitimacy is the product of the people's acceptance of its Government, not the product of a decision taken by foreign forces — not, indeed, of a programme drawn up by an international organization, even if that organization is the United Nations.

Chapter VIII of the Charter allows regional organizations and arrangements considerable leeway within which they can navigate the containment and settlement of disputes, always recalling that the primary responsibility remains with the Security Council. The fact is, however, that the Council does not deal with all regional arrangements on the same footing. While the Council may give a particular regional organization the opportunity to assist in preventing or settling a crisis, it may ignore another regional organization in a similar situation. We believe that the proper functioning of the collective international security system in the coming years will require the Council's efficient use of assistance by the regional organizations in addressing various crises.

Finally, Sir, at the beginning of your introduction of the item under consideration, you stressed the gravity of the challenges — longstanding or new — that our world is facing. You called on participants to mobilize their efforts in order to overcome these challenges. Both you and the Secretary-General referred to the importance of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building operations, and, finally, you called on us all to participate, at the international and regional levels, in the prevention, management and resolution of disputes. This is logical and acceptable, but reality and current problems may require different and quicker mechanisms.

Seasoned statesmen among us — those well versed in international relations and who follow regional conflicts and the role of the United Nations in such conflicts — have noted that these ideas have, to the letter, been on the minds of those who have sat at this table year after year, decade after decade. I truly fear that we are taking the same road our predecessors took and that we will end up with the same recommendations, only to see them flouted.

Yes, a fait accompli has forced itself upon us; we all are aware that the war in Iraq is a dangerous international conflict. Perhaps its first chapter is over, but there surely are more chapters to come. Foreign occupation, in whatever guise, will sooner or later lead to a revolution, particularly since emotions throughout the region are running high. People in the region are enraged and infuriated.

Then there is the failure by the Security Council and the General Assembly to address this conflict as mandated by the Charter. This failure threatens the core of our system of collective security. I say this because the situation is both novel and grave. Indeed, the Security Council was silenced, and the war is raging. It is a real war — one that the members can watch day in and day out, as if it were a sad movie.

Adding insult to injury, some are saying that this war is but the first act of a long play that will threaten the entire Middle East region. This alone makes it incumbent upon us not to let this meeting share the fate of similar, earlier meetings at which recommendations were adopted.

Here I would suggest that we call for the convening of an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, similar to other conferences that were convened to address problems drastically affecting societies, such as the question of human rights. It is high time for us to convene an international conference on international peace, its maintenance and the challenges facing it.

Such a conference should be preceded by regional meetings on the same subject. These could be organized by region or by geographic grouping and would do preparatory work relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. They would also consider the status of the collective security system in the wake of the blows it has been dealt, with a view to averting any further blows.

International and regional security cannot and should not be allowed to be defined by one State alone, or even by a group of States, outside of the United Nations. As long as it is possible for the Council to be silenced and for the General Assembly to be prevented from undertaking its role, the only solution may be the convening of an international conference to address

existing problems. We hope, Sir, that the Council will, under your presidency, propose this idea and that it will be addressed in other regional organizations. We hope that this idea will not be ignored — as the Security Council and the General Assembly were at one of the most critical moments for regional and international security.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Let me at the outset, Sir, perform the pleasant duty of welcoming you back to New York and to the Security Council. We are honoured to participate in this meeting under your presidency.

This is an important meeting on an important topic which your country has chosen for our discussion. I welcome the thoughtful remarks that have been made by the Secretary-General, and I welcome his presence and participation. We wish also to thank the Secretaries General of the various regional organizations for their presence here.

I would like, through you, Mr. President, to welcome my dear friend, Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary General of the Arab League. We listened to his statement very attentively.

The Security Council, under the Charter, is supposed to provide for a system of collective security. This system is designed to protect the weak from the strong. It is incumbent on us, despite the imperfections of the Security Council and of the Charter, that we who need the Security Council and the United Nations more than the stronger States not do anything to erode its authority or question its viability, even in these difficult times.

It is our conviction that it is not the Security Council which has failed in the current crisis. The failure, if there is one, is a failure on the part of the member States of the Council to agree, and in particular a failure on the part of the permanent members of the Council, who hold the power of veto, to agree among themselves.

In fact, if anything, what has been established is that the Security Council has set very high benchmarks for the enforcement action envisaged in Article 42 of the Charter. I think that this is a positive aspect if one looks ahead to other possible crises.

I would like to quote from an article which appeared in the *International Herald Tribune* yesterday. It was the obituary of a United Nations civil servant who died of a disease in Viet Nam. The article said in part that: "The United Nations is not a bully, not a know-it-all, not a superior force, and it is not irrelevant."

Even if we believe that the rule of law has been violated, it is incumbent on us to work towards the restoration of that rule of law in international relations. We cannot do so by questioning the viability and effectiveness of the Security Council. We must work to restore whatever flaws and failures we see in the operation of the Security Council.

My delegation continues to believe that the Security Council will remain central to the future of peace and stability not only in Iraq but also in the Middle East and in other areas such as South Asia, on which Security Council resolutions have been adopted, establishing the framework of legality for the conduct of relations in that context. That is our conviction. We believe that regional organizations can be helpful and viable only so long as they act on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and in response to the legality established by the resolutions of the Security Council. That must remain the driving force for regional organizations.

Finally, we believe that in the future, what we shall need to develop to address conflicts and disputes in various parts of the world are hybrid formats that include regional countries directly involved in disputes but also major Powers and perhaps the Security Council itself as an intermediary that can provide the framework, the legality and the power for the solution of regional conflicts and disputes.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I give the floor to the next speaker, I wish to note the presence of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jan Kavan.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): As we all deepen our understanding of what is required to deliver security at all stages, from conflict prevention through peacekeeping to reconstruction and peace-building, not least in the face of new emerging threats including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism, the Security Council's task is becoming increasingly complex and broad. We do not underestimate the Council's existing strengths, or the extent to which these have developed in recent decades. But in developing its ability to protect

international peace and security, which is what is here for, the Council needs to develop the tools to do this.

Therefore, the United Kingdom welcomes your initiative, Mr. President, to hold this meeting and your presence as you lead us in it. Regional and subregional organizations are key players in operationalizing the Council's work. It is important for the effectiveness of the Council's decisions that we strengthen the relationship with regional organizations and, as appropriate, encourage strengthened relationships between them. The Counter-Terrorism Committee's 6 March meeting with regional organizations may offer some models.

I wanted to offer some brief questions about how we might do these things, and shall do so under three headings: developing information exchange, developing capacity and developing relationships. In asking these questions, my delegation does not wish to suggest that nothing is happening. On the contrary, we have already heard this morning much that is going on among regional organizations. But we want to encourage examination with the representatives of regional organizations here today of whether the Council is doing enough.

So, I turn first to information exchange, because better flows of information should make for stronger decision-making. With respect to the flow of information from the Council to regional organizations, we would like to ask how well informed regional organizations feel about Council discussion and decisions. Is there room for improvement? We send Security Council resolutions to all Member States. Should they go to regional organizations as well?

Then there is information from regional organizations to the Council. How can regional organizations better respond to Council requests for information and cooperation, for example requests for reports on the activities of troops of regional organizations or on the implementation of United Nations sanctions by countries belonging to a regional organization?

And there is information flow in both directions between the Council and regional organizations. We think that there is scope for a more regular and more energetic exchange of views and information. So, are there mechanisms we should explore for better liaison, for example more exchange between situation centres?

And finally, with respect to exchanges between regional organizations, how can the sharing and transfer of best practice be improved? Are there things that the Council can appropriately do to encourage this?

Turning to my second set of questions, on capacity, we think it useful to understand and develop the capacity available for Security Council action. Similarly, we think that it is useful to understand and develop the capacities for local and regional dispute settlement. Do we as a Council need to broaden our understanding of the range of regional organizations that can help address emerging threats to international peace and security? We as a Council have made heavy use of the Economic Community of West African States and NATO. But are there any entities that we are neglecting: civil society organizations, or regional organizations with election monitoring capacity, or human rights organizations?

And how can the United Nations and its Member States help develop the capacity of such regional organizations and of the Council to work with them so that they can do more to address emerging threats to peace and security in their regions? Is there scope not merely for information exchange between regional organizations but also for capacity-building between them. This morning we have heard the offer from the Organization of American States to assist other regional organizations, drawing on its experience. And as a European, I wonder whether the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe could offer more of its experience to organizations in other regions and whether the civilian crisis management component of the European Security and Defence Policy could be replicated elsewhere around the globe.

Finally, turning to my third area of questions, on relationships: exchanging information and building capacity will be valuable. But beyond this, we think there may be scope for further developing understandings about how such capacities can be employed. Is there scope for the United Nations to develop general, formal understandings with regional organizations about how they are most likely to be able to add value to the Council's efforts? Structured dialogue between regional organizations and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, for example, could build understanding of how traditional Council

capabilities can be complemented by the resources of regional organizations.

As a member of the European Union, the United Kingdom has worked jointly since 1998, with France in particular, in developing European crisis management capability, and we very much welcome the beginnings of a United Nations dialogue with the European Union in this area.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Amre Moussa for three minutes to respond to the comments and questions raised.

Mr. Moussa: I really valued the two comments made by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan and the representative of the United Kingdom.

On the first comment, I would say that, indeed, it is incumbent upon us who need the Security Council and the General Assembly to do everything possible in order to prevent the erosion of the authority of the Council and the credibility of the system. Ambassador Akram used a different expression to describe the same situation when he referred to the failure of the States members of the Council, in particular the permanent members, in performing their duties. It is saying the same thing differently, but he chose to say that there is a growing feeling that the Security Council is under serious threat when it comes to its role and its credibility. I share with him the hope that the Security Council will remain central in maintaining international peace and security, but this needs reconsideration and lessons to be drawn from what has taken place in recent weeks.

As for the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom, I very much agree with his statement on dealing with the information flow when it comes to the interaction between the Security Council or the United Nations and regional organizations. Yes, indeed — we have to develop a system in which information can go both ways in order for both sides to benefit from the wealth of information available to the United Nations as well as to each and every regional organization.

As for capacity in dispute settlement, we need to join hands in dispute settlement and to highlight the cooperation with regional organizations, which is indeed lacking. What can we do and what should we do to help regional organizations to perform their duties in the preservation of international peace and security under the auspices of the Security Council, in accordance with its competence? The Security Council has to shoulder this competence first if regional organizations are to be able to help. We need a programme of cooperation on the points of both information and capacity, within the framework of the Charter.

This, I believe, would take care of the third point mentioned by the representative of the United Kingdom: to develop formal understanding in order to be able to add value to the work of the Council, which it really needs badly.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Ján Kubiš, Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kubiš: It gives me great pleasure to be here before the Security Council after my previous appearances as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, and now in my capacity as Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). On behalf of OSCE and its Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer of the Netherlands, I thank you, Sir, for the invitation to participate in this timely meeting.

During the Istanbul OSCE Summit of 1999, the heads of State and Government of the OSCE participating States reiterated

> "the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security and its crucial role in contributing to security and stability in our region".

They also reaffirmed OSCE as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, as a primary organization for the peaceful settlement of disputes within its region and as a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as the inclusive and comprehensive organization for consultation, decision-making and cooperation in its region.

From its inception in 1975, OSCE's work has been based on the concept of comprehensive, common and indivisible security. From that perspective, OSCE

promotes equally human rights, the rule of law, democratic institutions, free media, free and fair elections — including election supervision and monitoring — economic reforms, good governance and the fight against corruption, and ecological security, alongside more traditional political and politico-military aspects of security, including confidence- and security-building measures and small arms and light weapons-related activities, to mention but a few areas. The multifaceted, cross-border nature of security challenges in the modern world, such as terrorism, trafficking, transnational organized crime or ethnic and religious discrimination and intolerance, requires both a multidimensional approach and a common response.

OSCE has always constituted a unique forum for inclusive political and security dialogue and cooperation among its participating States and for developing principles and standards in different areas of security, but it is also an action-oriented and highly operational organization. Practical instruments at our disposal include our institutions: the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Secretariat, as well as the Parliamentary Assembly.

Approximately a decade ago, OSCE deployed its first mission. Currently, OSCE missions and field operations are a hallmark of the organization. Nearly 4,000 of our international and local staff work in 19 civilian field operations and some 80 per cent of the OSCE budget is devoted to their work.

To deploy our missions rapidly requires, among other things, simple, operational and efficient resource-management solutions supported by robust and reliable information technology. At their core are clearly defined responsibility and accountability, roles and processes built around OSCE programmes managers, heads of institutions and heads of missions.

To increase the Organization's responsiveness to modern security challenges, the recent OSCE Ministerial Council in Porto last December took a number of important decisions. OSCE has decided to develop in the course of this year an OSCE strategy to address threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century. The strategy will make an inventory of threats to security and stability in the OSCE area and analyse their changing nature and main causes, setting out how OSCE can prevent or counter threats to security and stability and contribute to relevant international efforts. The ministers have also decided to conduct a review of peacekeeping with a view towards assessing OSCE capacity to conduct peacekeeping operations and identifying options for potential OSCE involvement in peacekeeping in the OSCE region. Further, the first Annual Security Review Conference, to be convened this June, will provide a framework for an enhanced security dialogue in the OSCE area.

As has been the case with many other international and regional organizations since 11 September 2001, issues related to preventing and combating terrorism have risen to the top of the OSCE's agenda. The Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism, which was adopted by the OSCE's Ministerial Council at Bucharest in 2001, and the OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism, which was adopted at the Porto Ministerial Council in 2002, reiterated the core principles and approaches that guide OSCE actions in the fight against terrorism in support of the United Nations-led effort. Just a month ago, the OSCE reported to the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee's special meeting with regional organizations about the OSCE's activities and experiences in the area of counter-terrorism.

Other capabilities and capacities critical to preventing and combating both traditional and new security challenges which have been built up by the OSCE in recent years include policing, border monitoring and security, and combating trafficking in all its forms. Further strengthening the OSCE's work in those areas is an important priority for the Dutch chairmanship-in-office of the OSCE in 2003. For example, the forthcoming 2003 OSCE economic forum, which is to be held in Prague, will be fully dedicated to the issue of combating trafficking in human beings, drugs and arms.

The lessons learned from the four OSCE missions that currently possess a police-related element and from the expertise established in the Strategic Police Matters Unit, which was formed last year in the secretariat, are now enabling the OSCE to comprehensively implement police-related assistance in the areas of reform, training and capacity- and institution-building.

Because of its broad and supportive membership, its comprehensive approach to security and its proven operational flexibility, the OSCE has demonstrated a high degree of effectiveness in developing and rapidly deploying multidimensional activities. It has also proved to be a good partner for other organizations involved in complex peace operations. The OSCE pays special attention to the complementarity of its efforts with those of the United Nations, which is indeed the vital cornerstone of multilateral responsibility and action. The aim is to introduce a concerted operational mechanism to strengthen the common response to new threats to international and regional stability and security. Regular meetings between the Secretary-General and regional organizations assist us in that endeavour.

There are a number of examples of how we work side by side with our international partners — with the United Nations in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro, where the OSCE Mission in Kosovo constitutes the democratization and institution-building pillar of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK); as well as in Georgia and, in the past, in Tajikistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among our other key international partners are the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Council of Europe and, increasingly, organizations within the region of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The OSCE's guiding principles and commitment to such cooperation are defined in its Platform for Cooperative Security, which is the operational document of the 1999 OSCE Charter for European Security.

At the same time, as a regional organization, the OSCE also sees its role as being a general framework and forum for interaction and cooperation among subregional organizations and initiatives working in the OSCE area. Furthermore, the OSCE has maintained or intensified its contacts with other regional organizations outside the OSCE area, including with the Organization of American States, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In that endeavour the aim has been to share our experiences in various areas. A good point of departure for such cooperation is our joint work with six OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation and four Asian Partners for Cooperation. The fourth Asian partner is Afghanistan, which was admitted as OSCE Partner for Cooperation two weeks ago.

In conclusion, I would once again like to express the OSCE's appreciation for this initiative by the Mexican presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to emphasize the fact that the OSCE is open to cooperation, ready to share its knowledge and experience and willing to learn from the United Nations and other international partners.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are happy to see you in the Chair, Mr. President. We welcome Mexico's initiative to hold this meeting, and also welcome the statement made by the Secretary-General, who has given his constant attention to forming various partnerships in order to fulfil the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We would also like to welcome the high-level representatives of the regional organizations participating in today's debate. That participation underscores the importance of the subject proposed by Mexico for today's discussion.

As other speakers have noted, a wealth of experience has been attained with regard to the Security Council's cooperation with the organizations participating in this meeting, as well as with other organizations. The Council has actively cooperated with the Organization of American States (OAS) to resolve conflicts in Central America and in Haiti. The Council has also had reliable partners in working to find settlements for hot spots in Africa, including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other subregional organizations of the continent. The European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are making an important contribution to our common efforts to resolve conflicts in the Balkans and other parts of the world. We are convinced that the League of Arab States (LAS) should play an important role in the search for peaceful ways to resolve the many problems in the Middle East.

Of course, those invited to our meeting today do not represent the complete list of regional organizations that, in cooperation with the Security Council, have made, and continue to make, a significant contribution to maintaining regional security in various parts of the world. Among those other organizations is the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which works closely with the

United Nations to resolve conflicts. CIS peacekeepers have already made a significant contribution to settling the crisis in Tajikistan. At the moment, they and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia are maintaining security and stability in the area of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

We would also like to emphasize the role being played by the Collective Security Treaty Organization, whose members were the first to raise the matter of the need to move against the Taliban regime that ruled Afghanistan.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is very important to providing stability and security in the vast Asian region, which includes the countries of Central Asia, China and Russia.

At this complicated stage in international relations, it is more pressing than ever that we consistently develop and improve cooperation at the United Nations, in particular the cooperation between the Security Council and regional and subregional bodies. That should be done on the solid foundation of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly on the basis of Article VIII, which has been referred to today by the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and other participants in this meeting.

Bearing in mind the growing role of regional peacekeeping, we support the further development of cooperation in that field while more effectively utilizing the potential and resources of regional organizations and increasing coordination and complementarity between them and the United Nations. Such interaction should be flexible and should be developed in the light of the leading role played by the Organization, with a sensible division of labour among regional and subregional structures, taking each of their comparative advantages into account.

We continue to believe that authorization by and accountability to the Security Council should be inherent in any regional or coalition peacekeeping operation, particularly when enforcement action is included in its mandate. Here, the indisputable guidelines continue to be the basic principles and criteria of international peacekeeping activities, including strict compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and with the generally recognized norms and principles of international law, in accordance with which the Security Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Success in developing the interaction of the United Nations with regional and other organizations will, to a large extent, determine how effective the international community's response will be to the multitude of new challenges facing us today, including the threat of international terrorism. That threat led to the creation of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). We actively support the work of the CTC, and we support the further development of cooperation between the Committee and regional organizations with a view to implementing the various decisions adopted by the Council.

Russia is firmly convinced that the future lies with collective efforts to resolve problems common to the international community as a whole. We believe that, in today's environment, in order to practically implement the concept of collective security enshrined in the Charter, we need to establish a global system to deal with current challenges and threats. Clearly, this kind of system must be universal and comprehensive in order to ensure that effective decisions are adopted, bearing in mind the direct link between those new challenges and threats.

Of course, the coordinating centre for that kind of system must be the United Nations. The Millennium Declaration, adopted at the Millennium Summit of the General Assembly, outlined the main goals of this future work. The effective achievement of those goals at this stage should be facilitated by the adoption by consensus, during the current session of the Assembly, of resolution 57/145, "Responding to global threats and challenges". That resolution provides for contributions by regional organizations to the tasks outlined therein, and we hope that their contribution will be an important one.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for the initiative of the delegation of Mexico. As Ambassador Schumacher said, it is natural for Mexico to take such an initiative, given the Organization's history and the role that Latin American countries played in the elaboration of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

(*spoke in French*)

At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and to say how receptive we are to the message that he came to give us, at a time when the Organization is trying to strengthen and consolidate its central role in international relations — a role to which my country is deeply attached. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mr. Jan Kubis, for his statement and to welcome the presence in the Council Chamber of the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr. Ioannis Magriotis. Greece is a country that is a neighbour and a friend of mine, and my delegation associates itself with the statement that he will make shortly on behalf of the European Union, since Bulgaria, as the Council knows, is an associated country of the Union.

I shall focus on one of the possible dimensions of the complex relations between the Security Council and regional organizations. I note that there is a consensus around this table that those relations are productive and important. It is clear that threats to international peace and security are in full transformation. Increasingly, these new threats are determining the need to adapt the Council's response to them in order to ensure peace and security in the world.

On the one hand, in some parts of the world we are seeing weak States that are experiencing significant internal difficulties, where the threat to international peace and security comes from within the States themselves. On the other hand, we are seeing the emergence of transnational factors that are threatening peace, and the first such example that comes to mind is certainly terrorism. But these threats are not only the traditional military and political kind; they are also humanitarian, economic and political. These complex threats demand an additional effort on the part of Security Council to adapt to them and to confront them. And there, in our view, the role of regional organizations is essential.

The United Nations and the Security Council, in most cases — in fact, in every case — ensure a flexible framework with a view to cooperation with various organizations, which enables them to work the terrain, so to speak, on solid judicial and legal foundations.

Let us consider the example of other peacekeeping operations. In the past decade, those operations grew in size and importance. They went from the traditional model of observation and hostile force to much more complex structures in which not only military contingents but also police contingents and civilian personnel — including experts from various spheres — also participate. This civilian dimension of peacekeeping operations, in our view, is assuming increasingly obvious importance.

We believe that there is a need to define a complex, comprehensive approach to the maintenance of international peace and security — an approach that should encompass respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, international law and the rule of law.

Cooperation with regional organizations in these areas is increasingly required as an effective instrument in addressing these challenges. It is becoming increasingly clear that emphasis needs to be put not just on the consequences of instability and threats to the peace but on the causes of conflict.

The Security Council continues to bear the primary responsibility for defining the mandates of peacekeeping operations, especially when their implementation involves regional organizations. We believe that the Council should expand and strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations in the context of their working with civil society structures for strengthening the rule of law, buttressing local democracy, promoting decentralization and ensuring respect for human rights.

The complex structure of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) provides an example of cooperation with regional organizations such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO. Interaction between KFOR and UNMIK is an important element in the maintenance of stability in Kosovo.

In conclusion, I should like to say that as of next year, Bulgaria will hold the chairmanship of the OSCE for a year. One of the main focuses of the Bulgarian chairmanship of that important regional organization will undoubtedly be cooperation with the Security Council. The task of the Bulgarian chairmanship will be made easier by the past experience to which Mr. Kubiš referred earlier. I would like to mention in particular the Common Concept for the Development of Cooperation between Mutually Reinforcing Institutions — a document formulated at the 1997

OSCE Ministerial Conference in Copenhagen, which served as the basis for the Charter for European Security, adopted in Istanbul in 1999.

One of the priorities for the Security Council and, I believe, for the OSCE, is combating terrorism. How does the Secretary General of the OSCE evaluate the cooperation between that organization and the Security Council, in particular the Counter-Terrorism Committee, in this area?

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Jan Kubis to respond to the comments and questions raised by the Russian Federation and Bulgaria.

Mr. Kubiš: I would like first of all profoundly to thank all those speakers who have acknowledged the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Our cooperation with the United Nations and other partner organizations is, indeed, expanding this year rather well under the very dynamic chairmanship of the Netherlands. I would like once again to reiterate that there is a strong commitment to developing such cooperation, and I very much welcome the pledge made by our Bulgarian colleague — Bulgaria will, indeed, be next year's OSCE Chairman-in-Office — to make cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations one of the priorities of the forthcoming chairmanship.

With regard to some of the more specific points made by previous speakers, I am particularly grateful to the United Kingdom for a number of ideas, questions and proposals on how to focus on and enhance cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. I would like to say that in many respects they very much harmonize with what the OSCE is trying to do and with its focus in all three areas mentioned by the United Kingdom. I would like to say that there can never be enough information exchange. Again, I cannot speak about what should be done by the Security Council and its members, including those in my organization. But I can assure the Council that, at the OSCE secretariat level, we are engaged in regular exchange with the United Nations system — not only with the Secretariat here in New York but also with specialized agencies. We continue to be committed to the expansion of this process. The same goes for our partner organizations. We are expanding the contacts among our situation centres and operational rooms. Again, this is one of the features of our approach — how to improve our very practical operational cooperation.

With regard to developing capacity and gaining a better understanding of what we are doing, again I would like just to reaffirm how warmly we welcome this excellent and very timely initiative of the Mexican presidency of the Security Council. This is indeed one of the ways in which to create a much better understanding of the capacities of regional and subregional organizations, which might also be of use with regard to the objectives and purposes of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole. In my statement I tried to highlight a couple of points with regard to our capacities.

Indeed, in order to understand better what we are doing, we also try to engage our partner organizations in information exchanges as well as mutual visits. I mentioned our outreach programme with regard to organizations outside the OSCE area. They are very much interested in our experiences in the human dimension, as well as in confidence- and security-building measures. For example we are engaged in exchanges and experience-sharing with the African Union. With regard to developing understanding between the United Nations and regional organizations, in the context of this meeting and my presence here, I will be meeting with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, as well as the Department for Disarmament Affairs. I would like to stress that point. Those are our counterparts here in the United Nations Secretariat. This is not the first year in which we have been in touch with them. We have regular staff consultations and, on the ground, I mentioned Kosovo, where the OSCE Mission in Kosovo is a part of UNMIK — a pillar of UNMIK.

We participated in the 6 March meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and, again, I am glad that, like a few other organizations, we were acknowledged as a regional organization that has developed quite a strong programme of work for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We will continue in this vein in different areas, first of all to promote the implementation of United Nations conventions and protocols; secondly, to promote the implementation of the OSCE's commitments; thirdly, to assist our own participating States to implement resolution 1373 (2001) and our own commitments; and fourthly, of course, to develop

further contacts and experience-sharing with our partner organizations.

This is a brief response to the points raised by many of those present. Once again, I wish to express my gratitude for this very timely initiative. We look forward to further cooperation with the United Nations and its Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for his comments.

Given the fact that we are running late, and in my capacity as President of the Security Council, I should like to make a change in the format and to ask speakers to abide by the time limit. I am going to withdraw the option of second responses from members of the Council after a response is made by the speaker.

I call on Mr. Fholisani Sydney Mufamadi, representative of the African Union and the Minister for Provincial and Local Government of South Africa.

Mr. Mufamadi: Allow me to congratulate Mexico, both for its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and for creating this opportunity for the Council to engage in dialogue with regional representatives on a theme of such great importance.

As President of the Council, Sir, you succeed Guinea, which presided over the Council at a defining moment in the life of the Council. The theme of our dialogue assumes that we are dealing with a situation in which new factors have emerged, mandating that we rethink the propriety of current strategies for the maintenance of peace and security in the world. As members of the Council and members of regional organizations, we must approach this task as one that goes to the heart of our shared raison d'être: the unshakable responsibility we bear for peace and security in the world — especially the Security Council, which has the mandate for international peace and security.

As participants are aware, one of the challenges for post-colonial Africa has been the occasional outbreak of violent conflicts in various parts of the continent — so much so that many are unable to imagine an Africa without serious problems. Moral exhortations have often failed to dissuade the perpetrators of this scourge of violent conflicts. This is because such conflicts are caused by lack of access to resources. Indeed, warlords at the head of belligerent organizations have tended to use the disorder which ensues from such conflicts to gain disproportionate access to the limited resources of their respective countries.

In recent times, we have seen the African Union working in earnest to bring to fruition the vision of its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In 1993, the OAU, at a meeting of heads of State and Government held in Egypt, adopted the Cairo Declaration on the Establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. In 2002, the African Union agreed to establish a Peace and Security Council. Increasingly we are seeing the deliberate mobilization of African resources for use in dousing the flames of conflict which afflict such countries as Burundi, the Sudan, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As the Security Council is aware, the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — whom the opportunity for nation-building, much needed since the 1960s, had eluded — have finally, through dialogue, agreed on a vision of the kind of society they want to build for themselves. They have also agreed on the modalities to be used in the building of such a society.

The agreements signed recently have only started the country on what will prove to be a long journey towards lasting peace and sustainable development. The signatories to these agreements understand that the burden will become lighter only when shared. They invited the international community to come and fulfil what they see as an indispensable role in helping implement their agreements. We hope that the Security Council will support these agreements.

What we are seeing on the continent, therefore, are developments that constitute a powerful counter-argument against Afro-pessimism. Our optimism about the future of the continent is based on what we are prepared to do and are doing.

As we understand it, Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter enjoins the Security Council to support these initiatives. The fact that these initiatives are being taken in the spirit of Africans taking responsibility for the stability of their own region is itself an important development which must be encouraged. Of course, the strategies used in these initiatives are open to discussion and to critical scrutiny. Only then will it be possible for these

experiences to add value to the already existing global resources for conflict resolution and peacemaking.

Whatever the new factors which may have emerged in recent times, one thing must be accepted as a constant. We live in a world which requires Governments to deal with one another in the context of multilateral forums and organizations, as well as through the traditional mechanisms of bilateral diplomacy.

Although some of the African Union's instruments for peacemaking, peace-building and peacekeeping are still being finalized, recent developments have proved that our region has immense potential. Our position continues to be to work with the Security Council to assume collective responsibility for the identification of problems and the formulation of appropriate strategies by which such problems can be solved.

The manner in which the United Nations system was structured was a direct response to the challenges we faced in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Since then, we have seen an unprecedented move towards global interdependence, a move that throws up new challenges and calls for new responses. Among those responses is the need to develop structural arrangements that allow all regions fully to participate in the evolution and implementation of solutions to the current problems related to the maintenance of peace and security. We have seen the strengthening of regional and subregional organizations, which in turn leads to the strengthening of our premier multilateral institution, the United Nations.

We have had to collectively define the relationship between regional organizations and the United Nations. The African Union has always seen itself as supporting and strengthening the efforts of the United Nations. Any other approach would lead to chaos and anarchy. For any region to be successful in resolving conflicts, there will always be a need for a strong multilateral system that can address the collective security of all nations of the world. It is for that reason that we are pleased that the Security Council is engaged in this dialogue. We hope the dialogue will help the Council to recapture the strategic initiative with regard to the exercise of its duties and to define for itself a niche that is faithful to its mandate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Interim Chairman of the Commission of the African Union and the Minister for Provincial and Local Government of South Africa for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Today we are meeting to have an interactive discussion on the necessary synergy and partnerships that the Security Council and regional organizations need to establish and develop in the light of the new challenges to international peace and security. My delegation is grateful to your country, Sir, which has assumed the presidency of the Council, for including in your programme of work this meeting, which you are personally presiding over.

I am delighted at the presence at the beginning of today's meeting of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. We express our appreciation of his preliminary comments, which were particularly illuminating. I welcome the heads of regional organizations and thank them for being able to attend this meeting.

The Charter of the United Nations confers upon the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Articles 52, 53 and 54 of the Charter recognize the role that regional organizations can play in conflict prevention and in the maintenance of peace. It gives me pleasure to note today that regional organizations want to be more involved and, indeed, are becoming more involved in conflict-prevention and peacekeeping operations carried out by the United Nations in their geographical areas. That fact was aptly recognized and described by the Secretary-General when, speaking before the Council on 15 December 1999, he said, "During this decade peacekeeping has acquired a strong regional dimension virtually everywhere it has been practised" (*S/PV.4081, p. 2*).

Speaking after the Interim Chairman of the Commission of the African Union, whose presence among us and important contribution to this meeting I welcome, I will, with your permission, Sir, focus my statement on cooperation among the Security Council, the African Union and subregional organizations.

In the course of the open Security Council debates held on 30 November and 15 December 1999 and on 29 January 2002 on the situation in Africa, all speakers acknowledged the gravity of the situation in Africa and the need to help Africa to overcome its

current problems. Indeed, Africa is the region most affected by armed conflicts, and its development has inevitably been held up as a result of that. But Africa is aware of that situation and does not accept it as inevitable. That is why Africa is gradually organizing itself to make up for its socio-economic deficiencies and to ensure the maintenance of peace and security on the continent, as was recalled just now by the Interim Chairman of the Commission of the African Union.

The 1993 establishment of the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and, more recently, the creation in 2001 of the Peace and Security Council respond to that goal. In order to become operational, those two organs, which are essential to conflict prevention and settlement in Africa, require the assistance of the United Nations. That assistance should take the form of capacity building, the training of personnel and appropriate logistic. support, in particular within the framework of the implementation of an early warning mechanism, and, more generally, the deployment of African forces in theatres of conflict. Quite naturally, that requires considerable financial backing, which Africa expects of the United Nations and its other partners.

During the open meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa held in 1999, the Secretary-General stressed most opportunely:

> "It is only natural that African States are expected to play a leading role in their own back yards, and in many instances they have risen bravely to the challenge ...
>
> What is not natural, or indeed fair, is to expect Africans to carry out those tasks without help." (*S/PV.4081, p. 3*)

Here, we welcome the establishment of the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which demonstrates the Council's determination to strengthen its cooperation with the African Union in order to meet the new challenges to international peace and security. The recommendations of that Working Group provide the blueprint for the appropriate cooperation and coordination.

The appointment of special representatives and envoys by the Interim Chairman of the Commission of the African Union in theatres where the Security Council is operational constitutes another step in this direction. That was the case recently with Côte d'Ivoire and Somalia.

We also welcome initiatives taken by the Secretary-General to make the work done by the United Nations in Africa more effective and to ensure the better coordination of subregional efforts in the area of conflict prevention and settlement.

The establishment of the United Nations Office for West Africa is very important in that context. We have always believed that this effort should be followed up in other regions torn by domestic and inter-State conflict. Naturally, I am thinking of Central Africa. What I am about to say reveals the urgent need for such a step to be taken in that subregion. Seven of the 11 countries of the Central African subregion are in the throes of devastating conflicts. Five of the 12 peacekeeping, peacemaking or peace-building missions in Africa are operating there. Central Africa also has six of the Secretary-General's Special Representatives or Envoys currently in Africa.

Given this situation, the Security Council, in its presidential statement of 31 October 2002, recommended the dispatch to Central Africa of an inter-agency mission to evaluate the situation in the region and the potential areas and avenues of cooperation.

I wish very briefly to note that Central Africa has, within the Economic Community of Central African States, a Council for Peace and Security backed by the early-warning mechanism for Central Africa, the Multinational Force for Central Africa and the Defence and Security Commission. The capacities of these new structures need to be strengthened by the international community, the Security Council in particular, through staff and troop training programmes and technical and financial assistance. This intervention is so urgent because Central Africa, which is already experiencing so many conflicts, must also become involved in the great struggle against terrorism and the illicit traffic in and circulation of weapons. We will come back to this topic during the informal consultations scheduled for 17 April.

These are the new challenges facing the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular with regard to Africa, particularly Central Africa.

I wish to end my statement with some questions that may not be answered today, but will, I hope, during the consultations to which I referred.

My first questions are addressed to the African Union. What are the priority areas that require immediate action by the United Nations? How can the Security Council take into account African Union decisions on African questions with which it is seized? What contribution can the African Union and the non-African regional organizations make in conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace and security?

Turning now to the Secretariat, what is the situation with regard to the idea, which we have always supported, of establishing a focal point responsible for all the United Nations work in Africa?

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Cameroon for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks you, Sir, for presiding over today's meeting. We also welcome Secretary-General Annan and the participation of representatives of regional organizations, including the African Union, in this meeting.

According to the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter, while the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the regional organizations can also play an important role in promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes. The efforts of the two are mutually complementary. We appreciate the fact that the President has scheduled today's open meeting. We hope and believe that it can play its due role in strengthening coordination and cooperation between the Security Council and the regional organizations.

The African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have made great efforts and played very important roles in solving conflicts in Africa. Since its inception, the African Union's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution has regularly evaluated conflicts in Africa and played an irreplaceable role in stabilizing the situation there. In addressing significant issues, such as the situation in the Mano River region and the achievement of peace in Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS has played a very important role and achieved significant results, which we praise.

We believe that the African countries and peoples know Africa best and that they have the first say in the settlement of African issues. In addressing those issues, the Security Council must carefully listen to and fully respect the opinions of the African Union, other African regional organizations and the African countries. It must also further strengthen its coordination and cooperation with African regional organizations.

In this context, I wish to comment on three points.

First, prior to taking decisions on African issues, the Security Council should strive to coordinate with the relevant African regional organizations so that its decisions better reflect the opinions and positions of those organizations and the countries involved. This will improve the feasibility and efficiency of the Security Council's decisions.

Secondly, the African Union, ECOWAS and other African regional organizations have taken the initiative and undertaken some important actions in addressing problems in the Great Lakes region and in West Africa. These have yielded very good results. In the future, the Security Council and other United Nations bodies should coordinate their efforts as soon as possible with the African Union and African subregional organizations on the measures and actions they intend to take. If possible, they should extend timely support and coordination.

Thirdly, one very important experience of the Security Council in handling the crisis in Sierra Leone was its creation, in cooperation with ECOWAS, of a comprehensive and integrated approach to that problem. An integrated strategy has a very high reference value in approaching other African issues. The Security Council and relevant regional organizations should attach great importance to this.

In brief, the Security Council should prioritize the summarizing of its experience in strengthening its coordination and cooperation with regional organizations. This is a very important factor, which cannot be neglected, in strengthening the role of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Magriotis, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Magriotis (Greece): As this is the first time we are speaking under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of your duties. I would also like to extend our congratulations to the previous President, Guinea, for their excellent work.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries — Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Bulgaria and Romania have aligned themselves with this statement.

The European Union recognizes the increasingly important role of regional arrangements and organizations in the maintenance of international peace security and welcomes the consideration of this issue by the Security Council.

In recent years, a number of regional arrangements, organizations and agencies have created institutional capacities for early warning and conflict prevention in order to respond to the proliferation of internal disputes that may pose a threat to regional or international stability. The European Union strongly supports that development. Since 1999, it has been making a concerted effort to develop its organizational capability to respond effectively to the challenges posed by internal disputes. Three principles are guiding us in that endeavour.

First and foremost among those is the recognition that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and stability lies with the United Nations. In developing a crisis management capacity, the European Union aims to support the Security Council in carrying out its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. As we all know, those responsibilities are onerous. Addressing the challenges of conflict prevention, management and resolution requires an array of political, military, economic, social and cultural instruments. We in the European Union are particularly conscious of that fact. Originating as an experiment in conflict prevention in the aftermath of two world wars, and determined to prevent regional wars in the future, European integration brings our member States together in a multitude of ways.

The second guiding principle of European Union crisis management is therefore that crisis management must include a wide range of instruments, military as well as civilian. That is why we have placed as much emphasis on the civilian side as on the military domain in establishing priority areas and setting targets.

The third guiding principle of European Union crisis response is that our efforts must bring real added value to international crisis management. Our effort to develop capacity can bring about benefits only if it contributes to our collective global effort to respond effectively to threats to international peace and security.

Those principles have shaped our efforts since 1999. They underlie the establishment of four priority areas for the European Union's civilian crisis management capacity, namely, police, the rule of law, civilian administration and civil protection. Those capacities can be put at the disposal of the EU crisis management operations or at the disposal of the operations of the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

As a successful example of regional cooperation that is itself contributing to peace and stability, the European Union is committed to building and sustaining mutually reinforcing and effective relationships with the United Nations as well as with other regional organizations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. That requires action at the political level in terms of the capacity building of partner organizations and through operational interaction.

At the political level, dialogue with the United Nations and other regional organizations takes place in a wide range of contexts. Peace and security issues can be raised in such discussions, although in the case of regional organizations the scope will depend on the specific mandate of the organization concerned.

With regard to capacity-building, a key aspect continues to be the relevant needs of the regional organizations in terms of early warning, conflict-prevention and peacekeeping.

In relation to operational interaction, as foreseen in its programme for the prevention of violent conflicts, the European Union, through the European

Commission, is intensifying its practical cooperation with the United Nations system and other regional and subregional organizations. The list of possible examples is long, ranging from support to United Nations peace-building efforts through the Trust Fund for Preventive Action in order to facilitate early United Nations action in the whole range of preventive diplomacy, to support for various regional projects like the African Union's observer mission in Burundi and the Horn of Africa initiative.

In that respect, a regional European Union conference on conflict prevention entitled "Partners in Prevention" was held at Helsingborg, Sweden, in August 2002. The conference brought together the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and NATO to discuss how to strengthen capabilities and cooperation in order to prevent violent conflicts. The conference was held in response to the call made by the United Nations Secretary-General, in his report on the prevention of armed conflict, for regional workshops to discuss the regional dimensions of cooperation in conflict prevention. High officials from the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) also attended the conference. It aimed to stimulate increased interaction between the United Nations and other organizations and held out the possibility for similar meetings in other regions. The chairman's conclusions were forwarded to the Secretary-General. They will contribute to the next high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, which is scheduled to take place in July 2003.

The list of European Union instruments directly or indirectly relevant to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts is long. It includes development cooperation and external assistance, economic cooperation and trade policy instruments, humanitarian aid, social and environmental policies, diplomatic instruments such as political dialogue and mediation, and economic and other sanctions. Ultimately it will also include the new instruments of European security and defence policy.

In pursuance of each of our goals, we have set ourselves targets to be achieved by the end of 2003. Those targets involve concrete numbers of personnel that member States have committed themselves to providing. They also include concrete goals in order to be able to respond quickly to crises.

The European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the first example of the practical possibilities of cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in crisis management operations. We are committed to developing many more. We are currently exploring modalities for cooperation between the United Nations and the EU in the police as well as other civilian crisis management areas. We are also looking at cooperation in the military domain.

The responsibility of the international community, through the United Nations Security Council, for peace and security is indivisible. While supporting regional peace-building capacity, the European Union and its member States significantly contribute to United Nations peacekeeping through actively supporting and participating in relevant operations and activities throughout the world, from the Balkans to Africa and Asia. We currently have more than 30,000 women and men working hard for peace in the United Nations and United Nations-mandated operations. The EU member States have troops, military and civilian police observers and civilian staff in all current United Nations peacekeeping operations. In addition to these considerable personnel and other contributions, we also provide over forty per cent of the total peacekeeping budget. These figures manifest clearly our strong and unwavering commitment to peacekeeping, while we remain engaged in a continued dialogue with the United Nations aimed at further strengthening our partnership in peacekeeping.

The European Union supports regional and subregional cooperation in Africa through assistance to the African Union, ECOWAS, the East African Community and SADC. We are also actively engaged in various initiatives intended to enhance peacekeeping capacities in Africa. We encourage a close relationship between the United Nations and the African Union and subregional organizations, inter alia, the Economic Community of West African States, and we commend the recent efforts of these organizations in peacekeeping operations in Africa.

These actions require an assessment of needs, information sharing and coordination. The European Union welcomes the efforts of the Secretariat's Department of Peacekeeping Operations to work closely with all relevant actors in Africa at regional, subregional and national levels, in particular for

enhancing the capabilities of troop contributors and for capacity-building for regional and subregional organizations. We welcome an active role for the United Nations, specifically in the areas of sharing information, promoting transparency, mobilizing support and stimulating contacts between recipients and donors of assistance, for example, in training, equipment and logistics.

The European Union strongly supports United Nations peace-building action that prevents the recurrence of conflict and ensures peace and stability in the future. In this context, we firmly believe that the Organization should play a central role in post-conflict Iraq, as well as in other post-conflict situations.

The European Union also believes that in order to strengthen the collective security system of the United Nations system, regional arrangements or agencies should enhance their role in conflict prevention and resolution. Since this requires closer and more coordinated cooperation with the United Nations system, we welcome any new developments in this area.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece for his kind words addressed to me.

Ms. Menéndez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are very honoured by your presence, Mr. Minister, and we wish to thank you and Mexico for the initiative you have taken. At this crucial time that initiative could not have been more timely. It opens a new stage in a continued process the purpose of which is to tackle current challenges to international peace and security through greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

Speaking after the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, I of course fully endorse everything he has said. Given the late hour, I should like to focus briefly on one aspect that is of particular interest to us, and that is cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the area of conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention involves not only profound knowledge of the situation on the ground, but also direct intervention vis-à-vis the causes of conflicts, those that might destabilize the situation and provoke armed confrontations. For all these reasons — and the Secretary-General himself has indicated that these are among the ten basic principles in his report in 2001 — it is vital to include a strategy for prevention in all United Nations policies, as well as the efforts of the national Governments principally responsible for conflict prevention and the cooperation with regional and subregional organizations with the common purpose of preventing any situation that might be likely in the short or longer term to result in a conflict.

We believe that in many instances the ideal instrument for becoming familiar with the true nature of the situation in the field is the regional and subregional organizations themselves. For that reason we feel there is a need for the greatest possible cooperation by the United Nations, and particularly with the Security Council, with these organizations, through strengthening the various existing channels of communication and interaction.

The Minister has just referred to the recent European Union conference on conflict prevention. I will not dwell on that, as he has covered that ground. But we do regard it as a good initiative that might serve as a model for other organizations. It did serve, inter alia, to put into contact with each other many actors whose cooperation is necessary in conflict resolution.

In the General Assembly we are also currently discussing the process of conflict prevention, and we hope that will be fruitful. My delegation unreservedly supports that discussion.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Spain for her kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We wish to welcome you personally among us once again in the Council, Mr. President, and to thank you and your Mission for holding this very important meeting. It is being held within the framework of the importance that your friendly country, Mexico, has given it. It has an historical importance, for this matter is the core of Chapter VIII and Article 52 of the Charter, concerning regional arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is appropriate to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The great importance of discussing this issue stems also from the fact that it comes at a crucial stage for regional developments, particularly those in the Palestinian question and the invasion of Iraq. There is

continuous aggression against Palestinian people, which has increased with the invasion of Iraq. The Arab-Israeli conflict has continued for decades now, without the Council and the international community finding a solution. Now, we are facing a new situation in Iraq, which is very complicated.

Those two examples alone reveal our dire need, in the presence of a failure in the mechanism intended to maintain international peace and security, to improve the ways and means that the Security Council uses to maintain peace and security, by providing an opportunity for regional organizations to play an enhanced role in that endeavour.

In the light of the bitter realities in the Middle East, Africa and other parts of the world, Syria calls for the establishment of a network of mechanisms to ensure effective international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations — forsaking the traditional methods that have failed to date — in order to implement the principles and purposes of the Charter and those of international law and legitimacy, to put an end to international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations — particularly State terrorism — and to comprehensively put an end to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through the establishment of zones free of weapons of mass destruction in those regions and through the promotion and strengthening of agreements and conventions in that regard, not allowing any country to be exempt from such comprehensive mechanisms in a way that threatens peace and security.

We hope that, in the future, regional organizations will be in a better position to promote cooperation between themselves and the United Nations in order to guarantee peace and security in all their aspects, particularly in the light of an international environment in which in the past few weeks the Security Council and we its members have clearly failed to stop the outbreak of a war and have continued to be unable to deal with an invasion of a Member State.

We hope that the Security Council will resume its truly effective role, using diplomacy to prevent the outbreak of conflicts. Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States — whom we welcome and thank for his detailed statement, which focused on the thoughts and feelings prevailing in the Arab region and the bitterness pervading everyone's spirit with regard to the developments now occurring in the Middle East — spoke in detail about the cooperative role that the Arab League has played without any reciprocation on the part of the Security Council. I fully concur with what he said concerning the situation in Iraq.

I welcome all the representatives of regional organizations who are present at today's meeting, but I should especially like to welcome the representative of the European Union, who just spoke, and to emphasize that we believe in close cooperation among regional organizations. We also believe in Arab-European cooperation in all its aspects — which is a source of pride to us — in Arab-African cooperation and in Arab cooperation with regional organizations.

We value highly European Union participation in meetings of the Arab League during the Iraqi crisis and in meetings of the Security Council when the Iraqi question was under consideration, as well as European partnership meetings — all in the interest of international peace and security. We believe that there is an urgent need for the close sharing of information between the United Nations system and regional organizations. We must promote cooperation between the United Nations and all regional organizations, particularly with regard to issues that those organizations have in common with the Security Council and the rest of the United Nations.

We fully agree with the representative of the European Union that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. We welcome his statement that the European Union is determined to support the Security Council in shouldering its responsibilities within the framework of the United Nations. I note that we respect that European Union position, particularly in the light of what we have recently witnessed with regard to taking action outside the Council's competence and leapfrogging the Charter of the United Nations with respect to the Iraqi question.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker on my list is His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chambas: I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Minister, and your country on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We have every confidence that, under Mexico's presidency, the Council will continue to play a central role in the maintenance of international peace and security in a troubled world. I also congratulate your predecessor on having presided over the Council with such dignity during a tumultuous month.

In addition, I should like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the opportunity granted the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to participate in this all-important high-level meeting of the Security Council. We find the topic of this meeting, "The Security Council and regional organizations: facing the new challenges to international peace and security", to be most appropriate, for we believe that the Security Council should be collaborating more and more closely with regional organizations in facing certain new challenges to international peace and security. Certainly, in the West African subregion, we very much welcome such a collaborative working relationship with the Security Council and, if I might say so, with other organs of the United Nations. It is for this reason that we were pleased with the establishment last year in Dakar, Senegal, of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa.

A major challenge facing the West African subregion in the last decade or so has been the spate of conflicts. These conflicts have weakened already fragile State institutions, causing the deterioration of human capacity and the erosion of previous developmental gains. A notable common denominator in conflict-prone situations is the increasing marginalization of a large part of the population — predominantly youthful, largely uneducated and unemployed people, who then become readily available as recruits by unscrupulous warlords or factional leaders in a subregion with an excessive supply of small arms.

ECOWAS has responded to the spate of conflicts in our subregion — the Mano River Union countries, Guinea-Bissau and now, regrettably, Côte d'Ivoire, which had hitherto been one of the more stable and prosperous countries in Africa — within the context of the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, adopted by member States in December 1999.

The Mechanism provides for preventive measures such as observation bureaux to provide early-warning signals, a Council of Elders to engage in preventive diplomatic missions, and the monitoring of elections, which, when poorly or fraudulently managed, often lead to crisis. ECOWAS has also adopted a Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance to encourage member States to build up a culture of democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law and transparent governance as the basis for a stable polity.

It is in the area of conflict resolution and management that there is a clear and pressing need for collaboration between ECOWAS and the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. The cases of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia are illustrative in this regard.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS and its member States have been actively engaged in seeking and supporting a peaceful resolution to this potent threat to the peace and stability of our subregion. ECOWAS diplomatic efforts resulted in ceasefire agreements between the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the three rebel movements — the Mouvement Patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire, the Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest and the Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix — and paved the way for the Linas-Marcoussis Round Table negotiations and the resulting agreement. The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement was subsequently endorsed by ECOWAS heads of State, providing the framework for returning Côte d'Ivoire to durable peace and stability, as well as by this body in its resolution 1464 (2003) of 4 February 2003.

To supplement and support ECOWAS diplomatic efforts, the heads of State also agreed to deploy to Côte d'Ivoire a force of military observers to supervise the ceasefire and assist the peace process as required. Resolution 1464 (2003) also endorsed the ECOWAS force and authorized its mission, in accordance with both Chapter VI and Chapter VII of the Charter. By mid-March 2003, the ECOWAS force was fully deployed at a strength of 1,288. That force is working very closely in Côte d'Ivoire with French troops, who have been a stabilizing factor since the outbreak of the crisis.

The formation of the Government of National Reconciliation, with additional personal security requirements for its members, the imperative of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and of

border patrols with neighbouring countries to interdict the flow of arms, now mean that there is a need to expand the ECOWAS force to 3,209.

Belgium, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States have provided essential material, logistical, transportation and financial assistance to support the deployment of the ECOWAS force. However, the pressing concern now is the fact that the force will run out of funding — even for its present composition and mission — by the end of April 2003.

Indeed, this pressing and rather threatening issue was the primary concern of the tenth meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, held on 7 April 2003 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. That Council of foreign ministers decided at that meeting to send a delegation of five ministers, from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Senegal, to United Nations Headquarters to take this matter up with the Security Council and the Secretary-General.

ECOWAS would like to work with the Security Council to maintain the force in place so as to enable it support the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, which is evolving satisfactorily albeit slowly.

ECOWAS member States will be unable to keep their troops in Côte d'Ivoire at their own expense, given the precarious financial situation in contributing countries. Should States retain their troops in Côte d'Ivoire without adequate financial provision, there will be high risk of problems being fomented as a result of a botched peacekeeping operation, which has happened in a number of African countries in the past.

The ECOWAS peace mission has so far demonstrated that it can consolidate the peace already achieved on the political front and help return Côte d'Ivoire to its well-deserved position of stability and prosperity. A stable and prosperous Côte d'Ivoire has always been a catalyst for peace, stability and prosperity for all of West Africa.

The Security Council, working closely with ECOWAS, can and should provide the necessary support to sustain the operations of the ECOWAS mission in Côte d'Ivoire and thereby avoid the otherwise imminent collapse of the mission, which would have dire consequences for the peace and security of the entire subregion.

Regarding Liberia, we would like simply to state that continuing instability in that country poses a threat to the neighbouring countries of the Mano River Union, in particular Sierra Leone, as well as to Côte d'Ivoire, as events in the western part of that country now demonstrate.

ECOWAS, working with the International Contact Group on Liberia, has embarked on a new initiative to bring the Government of Liberia and the rebel Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) into direct talks for a ceasefire. At their meeting of April 7 in Abidjan, ECOWAS ministers for foreign affairs also called for the immediate convening of an all-Liberian round table involving the Government of Liberia, LURD and all registered political parties, to agree on a comprehensive framework for durable peace and to create conditions for credible, free and fair elections, due later this year. ECOWAS would like the Security Council to consider an appropriate monitoring mechanism for the ceasefire. The sad saga of Liberia should now be brought to a close.

I trust that the Council will help us to avoid a sad end to an otherwise happy story of subregional efforts to maintain peace and security in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Mexican presidency for having organized this open meeting.

I need hardly reiterate the usefulness of these thematic meetings to discuss substantive matters. France fully associates itself with the statement made this morning by Mr. Ioannis Magriotis on behalf of the European Union. He mentioned, inter alia, the role of Europe in the area of international peace and security, in particular in the Balkans and in Afghanistan.

Let me recall that Europe is acquiring a security and defence policy, proposed jointly by France and Great Britain — a policy which, it is hoped, will be able to contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations. We welcome the fact that appropriate contacts have already been established between the two

organizations. We believe that they should be expanded in future.

Before reacting to the statement made by Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, I should like to make a general comment on the relationship between the Security Council and the regional organizations. I believe that we need to ensure that our cooperation abides by the principle of complementarity. Each organization should intervene first and foremost in the area where it can provide real added value. Accordingly, I believe that one of the priorities for the future should be further to increase coordination between the Security Council and the regional organizations.

We must interact more, as we are indeed doing today, and we must inform each other about the work we are doing. We should not forget, however, that not all parts of the world are structured in the same way nor to the same degree with respect to regional organizations. We in the Security Council must deal with this lack of uniformity, which means that there is no single recipe that could be applied everywhere. We believe that, on the contrary, there should be as many modes of interaction as there are specific regional situations. We need to be flexible and inventive.

The most active regional organizations in the areas that we are dealing with today are in Europe and in Africa. In Africa, the involvement of heads of State and Government in resolving regional crises is absolutely crucial. Mr. Chambas mentioned Côte d'Ivoire earlier, noting that, with respect to the work done prior to the Linas Marcoussis agreements, in the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and all of the work done subsequently, we need to pay tribute to the work done by the President of Ghana in particular in implementing the Linas Marcoussis agreements. These agreements have enabled significant progress to be made, in cooperation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his representative, who had a very important role to play in the implementation of these agreements.

I wish now to respond specifically to what was said by Mr. Chambas. France has particular sympathy for ECOWAS, primarily because that organization is playing a crucial role in a region that is important to us, but also because it has followed the same path as ours did in Europe. ECOWAS was first an economic organization, before it acquired a political identity, supplementing it later with a political-military dimension.

I will not go into the role ECOWAS played in the 1990s in Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia. Today, in Côte d'Ivoire, its role — as I said earlier — is an indispensable element of the international community's commitment. Here I very much welcome the fact that this is taking place with full transparency and in harmony with the United Nations.

The Security Council, on the basis of the Linas Marcoussis agreements, endorsed the mandate given to ECOWAS's forces. The work done by ECOWAS is particularly noteworthy, since it is taking place both in the area of political mediation, particularly through the facilitation role played by its Chairman and Executive Secretary, and in the area of the deployment of interpositional and peacekeeping forces. I think that this record attests not only to the maturity of the organization but also to the West Africans' awareness of the crises in that part of the continent and the challenges to regional stability.

I believe that this is a sterling example of what the relationship between the United Nations and the regional organizations could be.

In order effectively to face up to the new challenges to international peace and security, we must increase our cooperation in several areas. I wish to take the opportunity of this dialogue with ECOWAS to suggest two avenues.

First, we believe that it would be in our best interests to strengthen cooperation between the regional organizations and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). We have seen that, in addition to the very valuable advice that can be provided by the DPKO, African organizations sometimes have trouble moving from the stage of sending observers to the stage of deploying peacekeeping operations. This is due to financial, logistical and planning requirements. Very often, before donors' promises are fulfilled, crises on the ground intensify.

It is important today, therefore, for donors to live up to their commitments and to pay the money pledged to ECOWAS at a time when ECOWAS is significantly stepping up its efforts in Côte d'Ivoire.

The draft resolution on Côte d'Ivoire that is being drafted in the Security Council is encouraging in this respect.

Secondly, I think that it might be useful to increase our cooperation in areas such as the combat against mercenarism and small arms. This is a core theme which was, quite wisely, highlighted by the Guinean presidency last month. I believe that the problem of mercenarism, which is fuelling and exacerbating so many conflicts in the world, can be better overcome through — as is occurring — global action in the Security Council, which is responsible for laying down norms and prohibitions, in conjunction with regional actions aimed at strengthening border controls.

These are these two avenues that I wanted to mention.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Traoré (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I wish to welcome you once again to the Council. I would like at the outset to thank the Mexican delegation for having convened this open meeting at a time when we really needed it. Secondly, I wish to thank the representatives of the various regional and subregional organizations for their valuable contributions to our debate. I should like in particular to thank the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mr. Chambas, for his important statement.

In my delegation's view, the organizations whose representatives we have just heard, because of the structure that they have established and of their experience, have reached a stage where they can truly address crisis situations. However, there are difficulties. Among them are, of course, the limited resources available — financial, material and logistical. To take the example of ECOWAS, the statement just made by the Executive Secretary was very instructive in this respect. For more than a decade now, given the numerous civil wars the subregion has faced, ECOWAS has been taking concrete steps to deal with those conflicts and end them. Very significant results have been achieved. But if we consider the current situation in Côte d'Ivoire, we have to recognize that there is an urgent need for funds. Efforts have already been made by some States, which the Executive Secretary has just mentioned — and my delegation thanks them. But I believe that it is important that other States follow the lead of those that have already acted.

I think that it would be good also to stress compliance with Security Council resolutions through cooperation rather than confrontation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. That is particularly important. It is normal that regional and subregional organizations should sometimes defend the interests of their member States. However, some States systematically violate Council resolutions. I think that is not a normal situation and that it should be condemned. The regional and subregional organizations must in that respect work closely with the Council.

Without naming any State, I would like to give an example. While the authorities of a State consider it quite normal to send the President of the Security Council a letter communicating their reasons for violating Council resolutions, it is simply a delaying tactic used to justify their systematic refusal to respect the principles of the Charter and their obligations. I think such conduct deserves to be denounced and should in no way be supported by subregional organizations.

With respect to maintaining ongoing relationships between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations through the representatives of the Secretary-General in various Member States, I think the West African subregion does not have any problems. The Executive Secretary has just welcomed the opening in Dakar of the United Nations Office for West Africa. As far as I know, cooperation between ECOWAS and that Office is functioning correctly.

I had a question, but I shall not ask it, as the Executive Secretary has described the situation of the troops of the ECOWAS in Côte d'Ivoire. I wanted to know what steps he considers that the international community and the Security Council should take to try to find a solution to the financial problems that the ECOWAS is facing. As he responded to that question in his statement, it is not worth asking again.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As there are no speakers remaining on the list, I will try to sum up very quickly. As participants know, the delegation of Mexico convened this meeting precisely because of the Council's concern about the concept of security at the regional level. We are therefore grateful for the

presence of all the representatives of regional organizations. I would like to indicate to the members of the Council that the conclusions of this meeting will be circulated later on so that we can all examine them together.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 2.15 p.m.